RESEARCH PROPOSAL

ACADEMIC TENACITY AND SELF HANDICAPPING BEHAVIOUR: MEDIATING ROLE OF SENSE OF COHERENCE

FOR REGISTRATION TO THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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INTRODUCTION

Many students who remain in school are not motivated or inspired and the more time students spend in K-12 education, the worse it gets. This lack of motivation to do well in school represents a serious loss of human potential with implications for students' wellbeing later in life and for our country's future economic growth.

Historically, research has focused primarily on the association between cognitive skills and academic outcomes such as, grades and test scores (Rosen, Glennie, Dalton, Lennon, & Bozick, 2010). This construct has been considered a central factor to student achievement, and defined as something that is largely inheritable and unchangeable (Farkas, 2003).

However, more recently, there has been an expansion upon this viewpoint to include non-cognitive factors and their role in the learning process (Farkas, 2003; Heckman & Rubenstein, 2001).

Psychological factors- also called motivational or non-cognitive factors- can matter even more than cognitive factors for students' academic performance. These may include students' beliefs about themselves, their feelings about school, or their habits of self-control. (Carol S. Dweck et al. (2014)

Tenacity has been identified as an important factor underlying a student's academic performance, and is defined as being the mindsets and skills that enable a student to look beyond more immediate short-term goals to more long-term goals (Dweck, Walton, & Cohen, 2014; Farrington et al., 2012). It also involves the ability to withstand challenges and setbacks to continue persevering and working towards achieving these goals (Dweck et al., 2014; Farrington et al.,2012).

The non-cognitive factors that promote long-term learning and achievement can be brought together under the label academic tenacity. At its most basic level, academic tenacity is about working hard, and working smart, for a long time. More specifically, academic tenacity is about the mindsets and skills that allow students to:

- look beyond short-term concerns to longer-term or higher-order goals, and
- withstand challenges and setbacks to persevere toward these goals.

Short-term concerns might involve worries about looking dumb or being excluded in school. They might involve an unwillingness or inability to put off immediate gratification in favor of longer-term achievements. Any of these factors may make students less engaged with school, less likely to take advantage of opportunities to learn, and less equipped to meet challenges or setbacks. (Dweck et al., 2014)

This suggests that there are four key mindsets that contribute to successful learning outcomes including, a sense of belonging at school, a belief that ability and competence can grow with effort, that one can succeed, and that the work is of value (Dweck et al., 2014; Farrington et al., 2012).

Past attempts to motivate students by promoting positive beliefs have included the self-esteem movement of the 1990s, which tried to motivate students by making them feel good about themselves, their abilities, and their prospects of success in school. Unfortunately, the self-esteem movement had the erroneous view that telling students they were smart or talented would raise their self-esteem and motivates them to do well in school. In fact, research has now shown that well-intended practices, such as praising students' intelligence or talent, often backfire. This is why research is so important and why an evidence-based approach to education is so critical. We need to know which mindsets and non-cognitive skills matter and how best to impart them in educational settings. (Carol, Gregory & Geoffrey 2014)

To learn better attitudes as beliefs is important but it is equally important to know what strategies are used by the students to blame their failures extrinsically but take credit intrinsically.

Self -Handicapping Behaviour

According to findings of Ganda & Boruchovich (2015), most participants reported the use of self-handicapping behaviors in the academic context such as procrastination, not reading theoretical texts, failure to organize study time, lack of attention in class, unconcern with school attendance and lack of effort. This result was expected and has important educational implications because these behaviors can affect learning and jeopardize student performance (Gadbois & Sturgeon, 2011; Leary & Shepperd, 1986; Leondari & Gonida, 2007; Schwinger & Stiensmeier-Pelster, 2011).

In the study by Barkur, Govindan and Kamath (2013), it was discussed that medical students experience substantial distress in their schooling, which contributes to poor academic performance, academic dishonesty, cynicism and substance abuse. Studies of performance-avoidance goals have indicated that "students who report this type of orientation use self-handicapping strategies to protect their ego and ultimately become a defensive pessimist. This creates an utmost importance for the study of those skills which will have an impact on self-handicapping behavior.

Self- Regulation:

The various studies have established that pursuit of a goal is associated with a high level of academic achievement further confidence in their own possibilities to mobilize cognitive resources and motivation necessary to successfully perform a task, correlates with a high level of academic achievement.

Adolescents struggle with the pursuit of long-term goals (Romer, Duckworth, Sznitman, & Park, 2010). Setting long-term goals and striving for their attainment require sustained self-regulation (Pintrich & Zusho, 2002; Reyna & Farley, 2006).

Self-regulation refers to certain conscious and unconscious processes by which the human psyche exercises control over the operation of the state and its internal processes.

Self-regulation is the key aspect through which the Self acts on the organisms. Studies show that self-regulation is a key ingredient in academic/ learning performance. Recent educational researches show that self-regulated learning help students to achieve the adaptiveness to the school environment, necessary for reaching the learning outcome. The self-regulated learner or the strategic help seeker reaches a mature level of cognitive and social development (Pintrich, 2000). This maturity gives to the self-regulated learner the flexibility and self-awareness necessary to persevere even in difficult conditions.

Students learn self-regulation through experience and self-reflection (Lee, Zhonghua, Yin, 2009), so it is a competence. Teachers can teach in ways that help students to become self-regulated students. Since self-regulation is not a personality trait, students can control their behavior and emotions to enhance learning and performance. (Fonagy, Target, 2002) Self-regulated learning is often perceived as a mediator between personal and contextual characteristics on the one hand and the level of student

performance on the other (Newman, 2009). A large number of studies show that self-regulation is a key ingredient in academic/ learning performance. Recent educational researches show that self-reguled learning help students to achieve the adaptiveness to the school environment, necessary for reaching the learning outcome. The self-regulated learner or the strategic help seeker reaches a mature level of cognitive and social development (Pintrich, 2000). This maturity gives to the self-regulated learner the flexibility and self-awareness necessary to persevere even in difficult conditions.

Perceived Competence:

A convincing body of research has demonstrated that students' self-perceived academic competence influences student motivation, learning, and academic performance. This explains why judgments of self-perceived competence are a key component of motivation and learning theories. However, few studies have simultaneously researched the specific effects of different types of academic self-appraisals on higher education students' achievement goals, persistence, learning approach, and academic performance. The present study tries to fill this gap in the available research literature. The results are expected to contribute at a theoretical and empirical level to the development of finer grained models about higher education students' learning.

The study by Ferla, Valcke & Schuyten (2010), is in line with other studies (Bandura and Schunk 1981; Pajares et al. 2000), does indicate that, in general, feeling academically competent pays off. Students reflecting high scores on all measures of self-perceived competence are more persistent, more likely to adopt mastery and/or performance approach goals, less anxious, process the learning material at a deeper level, and achieve better study results. However, this study also demonstrates that high self-perceived competence can turn into overconfidence: if high-perceived understanding is not accompanied by the motivation to understand the learning material at an even deeper level, students can become less persistent and therefore get poorer grades.

Aspirations:

Aspirations, as such, are abstract statements or values and beliefs regarding future plans (educational or/and employment plans) made by young people, i.e. the educational level a student wishes to achieve. According to Marjoribanks (1998), aspirations are defined as idealistic values that do not necessarily reflect specific socioeconomic realities that might be relevant in determining future mobility. Gorard et al. (2012) as 'what an individual hopes will happen in the future'.

Sense of coherence (SOC):

The Sense of Coherence (SOC) scale is a widely used instrument in medical as well as other research areas. Sense of coherence is assumed to be a useful concept when assessing an individual's orientation and internal strengths. Antonovksy, (1988) defined Sense of coherence as follows: A global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that: (a) the stimuli deriving from one´s internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable and explicable; (b) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and (c) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement.

The SOC concept is composed of three important components (a) Comprehensibility, (b) Manageability and (c) Meaningfulness, which are related to each other. These three components are within the person´s Sense of Coherence (Antonovksy, 1988). Systematic reviews have shown that SOC has proved to be a protective factor for mental health and for the development of a positive subjective state of both physical and mental health. Furthermore, in students SOC has been found to be a significant predictor of better states of mental and physical health (Saravia, 2013).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Researchers shows a great shift from study of pure cognitive factors of student achievement as grades and test scores, which are defined as largely inheritable and unchangeable to understanding the psychology of the student in their learning and achievement. Student's attitudes and beliefs is proving to have an important space in context of long term learning and student achievement.

Carol S. Dweck et al. (2014) in this review paper titled 'Tenacity Mindsets and Skills that Promote Long-Term Learning have reviewed the researches to show that educational interventions and initiatives that target these psychological factors can transform students' experience and achievement in school, improving core academic outcomes such as test scores, months and even years later. The review paper focuses on researches with adolescents, and particularly with low-income and minority adolescents, but have also draw on research featuring other groups, because many of the causes and consequences of academic tenacity apply to all students, regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender, or income level.

Findings from the research show that variables of academic tenacity are critical for on-going academic success. These factors include students' beliefs about themselves, their goals in school, their feelings of social belonging, and their self-regulatory skills. In this section, we review measures of these factors, highlighting their relevance to academic tenacity and their ability to predict students' future performance above and beyond their history of achievement. Interventions designed to positively affect these sources of tenacity and examine their effects on academic achievement, have been described. The result show that even though the lowest-performing and most at-risk students are thought to be the hardest to reach, it is often these low achievers who respond most to these psychological interventions. This is because in many cases these variables of academic tenacity were holding them back.

The finding that variables of academic tenacity consistently predict academic achievement suggests that psychological interventions that target these critical processes could change academic outcomes for the better. The interventions reviewed in this section target students' psychology—they do not alter the classroom curriculum or teachers' practices. These interventions cultivate a growth mindset in students; buttress the belief that they belong in school; encourage goals that promote challenge-seeking,

engagement, and learning; and foster the skills that enable students to pursue these goals tenaciously. Because these interventions target key psychological concerns, they have several unique characteristics. Although the actual teaching strategies and curricula that best serve students vary greatly, educators at every level can promote tenacity by sending the message, in word and deed, that their students truly belong and have great potential. All the tenets leading to academic tenacity have been taught and researches support that they have had results in the student population.

Earlier research on the correlates of Self-Regulation which is stated as below:

Daniela P. (2014) had conducted a research on 'The Relationship Between Self-Regulation, Motivation and Performance at Secondary School Students', The present paper comes to find an answer to which aspects of motivation and self-regulation of learning are involved in obtaining the academic performance for the secondary school students in Romania. This study includes 270 secondary school students, aged between 12 and 14 years. Research methods used in this investigation are two surveys based on questionnaires and study of documents. The instruments used were the Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire and Motivational Strategies for Learning Questionnaire. It was concluded that the competence of self-regulated learning has a strong impact on the level of attainment achieved by students, enhancing the relationship between motivation and performance. As per the findings of the study, self-regulation variable correlates strongly with motivation variable which confirms that a high level of self-regulation involves a high degree of motivation as well as the assumption that self-regulation moderates the relationship between performance and motivation. Findings suggest that competence of self- regulated learning has a strong impact on the level of school performance achieved by pupils therefore we believe to be one of the most important transferable skills that Romanian schools should focus in their curriculum.

Duckworth, Grant, Loew, Oettingena and Gollwitzera (2011), they conducted their research on, 'Self-regulation strategies improve self-discipline in adolescents: benefits of mental contrasting and implementation intentions'. It states that adolescents struggle with setting and striving for goals that require sustained self-discipline. Research on adults indicates that goal commitment is enhanced by

mental contrasting (MC), a strategy involving the cognitive elaboration of a desired future with relevant obstacles of present reality. Implementation intentions (II), which identify the action one will take when a goal-relevant opportunity arises, represent a strategy shown to increase goal attainment when commitment is high. This study tests the effect of mental contrasting combined with implementation intentions (MCII) on successful goal implementation in adolescents. Sixty-six 2nd-year high school students preparing to take a high stakes exam in the fall of their third year were randomly assigned to complete either a 30-minute written mental contrasting with implementation intentions intervention or a placebo control writing exercise. Students in the intervention condition completed more than 60% more practice questions than did students in the control condition. These findings point to the utility of directly teaching to adolescents mental contrasting with implementation intentions as a self-regulatory strategy of successful goal pursuit. The investigation suggests that adolescents can learn self-regulatory strategies that substantially improve the achievement of valued academic goals. In particular, adolescents can be taught specific techniques for effective goal setting and goal striving. Our findings are consistent with prior experiments spanning various areas in the health domain showing that adults who learn these strategies show improved long-term goal attainment (Adriaanse et al., in press; Christiansen, Oettingen, Dahme, & Klinger, 2010; Stadler et al., 2009, 2010).

Earlier research on the correlates of Perceived Competence which is stated as below-

Hughes.A, Galbrath. D & White. D (2011) conducted a research, 'Perceived Competence: A Common Core for Self-Efficacy and Self-Concept?'. This study uses Bandura's Multidimensional Scales of Perceived Self-Efficacy (MSPSE; Bandura, 1990) and Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA; Harter, 1988) to examine the extent to which self-efficacy and competency-related elements of the self-concept are independent constructs. Factor analysis of data provided by 778 high school students revealed that when measured using domain-general measures such as the MSPSE and SPPA, self-efficacy and competency self-concept do not represent totally separate, distinct constructs

It appears that for middle adolescent students, perceived competence is a common core for self-efficacy and self-concept.

Ferla, Valcke & Schuyten (2010), conducted a study on, 'Judgments of self-perceived academic competence and their differential impact on students' achievement motivation, learning approach, and academic performance'. Using path analysis, the present study focuses on the development of a model describing the impact of four judgments of self-perceived academic competence on higher education students' achievement goals, learning approach, and academic performance. Results demonstrate that academic self-efficacy, self-efficacy for self-regulated learning, academic self-concept, and perceived level of understanding are conceptually and empirically distinct self-appraisals of academic competence which have a different impact on student motivation, learning, and academic performance. Furthermore, the current study suggests that students reflecting high scores on the four measures of self-perceived competence, are more persistent, more likely to adopt mastery and/or performance approach goals, less anxious, process the learning material at a deeper level, and achieve better study results. However, this study also warns that high self-perceived competence (e.g., perceived level of understanding), if not accompanied by a mastery goal orientation, can turn into overconfidence resulting in lower persistence levels and poorer study results.

Uhrlass .D, Schofield .C, Coles . M, and Gibb.B (2009), conducted a study, 'Self-Perceived Competence and Prospective Changes in Symptoms of Depression and Social Anxiety'. The primary goal of this study was to evaluate the role of self-perceived social acceptance and scholastic competence in relation to older adolescents' levels of depressive symptoms and social anxiety. Consistent with previous research (Smári et al., 2001), we found that older adolescents' levels of social anxiety were more strongly related to their levels of perceived social acceptance than perceived scholastic competence. In contrast, levels of depressive symptoms were similarly related to deficits in both domains of perceived self-competence.

Extending these cross-sectional findings, it was found that levels of perceived social acceptance, but not scholastic competence, predicted prospective changes in levels of social anxiety. These findings suggest that, rather than simply being a correlate of social anxiety symptoms, levels of perceived social acceptance may contribute risk to future increases in social anxiety. Also, consistent with previous findings in younger samples (e.g.,Cole & Turner, 1993; Seroczynski et al., 1997; Tram & Cole, 2000),

we found that levels of self-perceived competence in both the social and the academic domains predicted prospective changes in depressive symptoms. Indeed, levels of perceived competence and negative life events appear to contribute independently to future symptom changes. Specifically, when all predictor variables were included in one analysis, self-perceived scholastic competence and social acceptance, as well as negative social events, independently predicted residual changes in depressive symptoms over the six-month follow-up.

Earlier research on the correlates of Aspirations which is stated as below-

Khattab. N (2015), conducted the study on, 'Students' aspirations, expectations and school achievement: what really matters?' this study examines how different combinations of aspirations, expectations and school achievement can influence students' future educational behavior (applying to university at the age of 17–18). The study shows that students with either high aspirations or high expectations have higher school achievement than those with both low aspirations and low expectations. Furthermore, complete alignment between high aspirations, high expectations and high achievement is the most important predictor of future educational behavior among students. However, it is also found that low expectations do not negatively impact students' future behavior when they have high aspirations accompanied with high school achievement. Additionally, the study finds significant ethnic differences in favor of white students at GCSE level, but that these differences are reversed in relation to applying to university at the age of 17–18. Aspirations can arguably help students improve their achievement, but they will be much more influential if they are accompanied with high expectations as well.

Hughes (2011), conducted a study, 'The Relationships between Self-Related Perceptions, Motivation, Aspirations and Achievements in an Academic Setting' This thesis explores the nature of the self and how the various self-perception constructs – self-esteem, self-concept, and self-efficacy – contribute to academic functioning. The research was undertaken in three stages. The first was designed to examine how the self is represented. Bandura's Multidimensional Scales of Perceived Self-Efficacy (1990) and Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (1988) were utilized to examine the extent to which self-efficacy and competency-related elements of the self-concept are independent constructs. Factor

analysis of data provided by secondary school students revealed that when measured using domain-specific measures such as these, self-efficacy and competency self-concept do not represent totally separate, distinct aspects of the self. The second stage was designed to examine how representations of the self-relate to academic performance, intrinsic motivation, and occupational and educational aspirations. Taking account of past academic performance and other factors that might impact on the self-perception–academic outcome relationship, self-efficacy was shown to be a better predictor of these outcomes than either of the other two self-constructs. Self-esteem was the least predictive. These findings suggest that self-efficacy and self-concept, but not self-esteem, are important for the development of academic functioning. The third stage of this research was designed to examine whether interventions can have a positive effect on how the self is represented, and if so, whether this also impacts on academic functioning. This thesis used a widely-used and Government-supported intervention programme to explore this issue in a real-world context. There were positive effects on some aspects of self-concept but not on any other variables. These effects were not associated with any changes in the academic outcomes. The reasons why this intervention did not have a wider impact are explored, and the practical and theoretical implications of the findings are discussed. This research provides a clearer understanding about where educators and education policy-makers should focus their efforts if the aim is to enhance self-related perceptions in school.

Earlier research on the correlates of Coherence which is stated as below-

Mowlaie, Mikaeili, Aghababaei, Ghaffari & Pouresmali (2016), conducted their research on, 'The Relationships of Sense of Coherence and Self-Compassion to Worry: The Mediating Role of Personal Intelligence'. Past research has associated sense of coherence and self-compassion to worry, yet it remains unclear how they contribute to worry. One possible route is through personal intelligence. In a convenience sample of 370 Iranian medical students, the relations of personal intelligence to the above-mentioned variables

have been examined, to see whether it mediates the relationships of sense of coherence and self-compassion to worry. As expected, worry was negatively correlated with sense of coherence, self-compassion, and personal intelligence. Personal intelligence mediated the relation between self-

compassion and worry, but failed to mediate the relationship between sense of coherence and worry. It has been concluded that self-compassion serves as a buffering factor against worry and negative thoughts, through personal intelligence. Gender and age have been suggested to moderate the path from sense of coherence to worry.

Saravia, Iberico & Yearwood (2014), conducted a study on, 'Validation of sense of Coherence (SOC) 13- item scale in a Peruvian Sample'. This study assessed the psychometric properties of the SOC-13 scale in a sample of 448 Peruvian college students aged 18-29 years old. Internal consistency reliability was estimated; criterion validity and factor structure analysis were also analyzed. Cronbach's alpha for the full scale was .80. The dimensional structure of the SOC was evaluated by means of Multidimensional Scaling and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The former assessed goodness of fit of two proposed structure models namely a one factor solution against a three factor solution. An acceptable model fit was found for the three-factor solution (RMSEA = 0.06, CFI = .92). SOC Correlations with Mental and Physical Health were $r = .59$, $p < .001$ and $r = .40$, $p < .001$ respectively. The SOC-13 scale showed appropriate psychometric properties regarding internal consistency, criterion validity and factor structure when tested in this Peruvian sample. Limitations were due to strong homogeneity within the sample, age range and non-representative sample size for all Peruvian population. Future studies should focus on further analyzing the SOC-13 structure and the ability of all items to properly measure Sense of Coherence in Peruvian young adults.

Jakobsson (2011), conducted the research on, 'Testing Construct Validity of the 13-Item Sense of Coherence Scale in a Sample of Older People' The aim was to study the construct validity for the 13-item Sense of Coherence (SOC) scale among people aged 75+. This study comprised 1753 people aged 76–102 years. Construct validity was measured in terms of the instrument's factor structure as well as discriminant and convergent validity. The result revealed that the instrument failed to show acceptable construct validity in any of the tests or in any age group. The correlation analyses exhibited no clear pattern that could be interpreted as evidence of acceptable construct validity, and the result of the factor analyses did not support the factor structure proposed by Antonovsky. However, this does not

necessarily mean that the theoretical concept is invalid, but that this version of the instrument may not be representative of the Sense of Coherence theory'

Earlier research on the correlates of Self Handicapping Behavior which is stated as below-

Ganda & Boruchovich (2015) conducted a research, 'Self- handicapping strategies for learning of preservice teachers'. The aim of the study was to investigate self-handicapping strategies applied by students in an academic context and to analyze the relationship between the use of these strategies and the students' gender, age and course year. The sample consisted of 164 students of both genders aged 18 to 48 years and enrolled in the second and fourth years of the undergraduate program in pedagogy at Brazilian public universities. The data were collected through open-ended questions and a self-reported Likert scale instrument. Students reported applying several self-handicapping strategies, such as procrastination and not reading the recommended texts. Young students and women reported a more frequent use of these strategies. The importance of identifying the self-handicapping behavior of college students is discussed in this article. It was interesting to note that the study participants, despite reporting the use of self-handicapping strategies, seemed aware of the impact of their actions on academic performance and are concerned about their professional training. These same students also reported that reflecting on actions that are detrimental to learning is a crucial step toward changing their behavior, enhancing their learning and academic performance and becoming good professionals. It is clear that these data are highly promising, particularly because they were collected from individuals who aspire to be teachers.

The findings of the study show that irrespective of age, gender or course year, students can display behaviors that are unfavorable to learning. Given these results and the paucity of Brazilian publications on the use of self-handicapping strategies, the need to further research on this topic is evident. In addition to identifying these behaviors, it could be interesting to propose ways to reduce the frequency of their occurrence in the academic setting. It can be expected that once students become knowledgeable regarding what these strategies are and how to minimize their use, they will be abler to modify their behavior during college.

Garcia, Teresa et al.(1995), conducted the research, ‘Worriers and procrastinators: Differences in motivation, cognitive engagement, and achievement between defensive pessimists and self-handicappers’. The goal of this study was to explore the role of affect in self-regulated learning: specifically, we examined the effects of two motivational strategies, defensive pessimism and self-handicapping on college students' (ii = 126) motivational outlook, use of learning strategies, and performance. We found that these strategies, which are used to regulate the affective outcomes related to evaluation, did indeed impact upon students' motivation, use of learning strategies, and performance. Our results suggest that affect is an important aspect of self-regulated learning, and that our models of self-regulation need to take into account affective concerns in order to fully address the complex and multifaceted nature of self-regulated learning.

While an argument has been made that motivational strategies are indeed an aspect of self-regulation, these are strategies that certainly would not be encouraged amongst students. The lower levels of achievement associated with self-handicapping and the high anxiety associated with defensive pessimism are by no means positive outcomes of schooling: however, the use of these strategies does exist, and the next step should be to identify the conditions under which these strategies are elicited.

Within the context of learning and achievement, consideration of both cognitive and motivational components is crucial (Pintrich,1989). The results presented here suggest that "self-regulation" is more complex than previously believed, since motivational strategies seem to moderate the cognition-motivation interface, and that affect is a critical factor in student learning, motivation and achievement.

Zuckerman M, Kieffer.C , Knee. R (1998), conducted the study, ‘Consequences of self-handicapping: effects on coping, academic performance, and adjustment’. It states that Self-handicappers erect impediments to performance to protect their self-esteem. The impediments may interfere with the ability to do well and, as such, may result in poor adjustment. Using a longitudinal design, the present studies examined prospective effects of self-handicapping on coping, academic performance, and several adjustment-related variables (e.g., self-esteem). It was found that, compared to low self-handicappers, high self-handicappers reported higher usage of coping strategies implying withdrawal and negative focus. High self-handicappers performed less well academically, an effect that was mediated in part by

poor study habits. Finally, high self-handicapping resulted in poorer adjustment over time, and poorer adjustment resulted in higher self-handicapping over time. These relations are consistent with the idea of a vicious cycle in which self-handicapping and poor adjustment reinforce one another.

METHODOLOGY

Rationale:

There is wide gap in the way we understand what motivates students to perform in academics. On one hand researches show that educational interventions and initiatives that target the psychological factors can transform students' experience and achievement in school, improving core academic outcomes such as test scores. However when the psychology of the student is taken into account, we understand that students need to think of themselves and school in certain ways in order to want to learn and in order to learn successfully. We also mean that they are able to regulate themselves in ways that promote learning. Further it is emphasized that when these attitudes and beliefs are in place, students will look and be motivated.

It was quite evident from the studies that perceived competence, self-regulation and aspirations all have positive impact on student achievement and level of understanding. In this context, very few studies have been done in Indian context as such we note that students' level of self-perceived understanding seem to be a useful measure of self-perceived competence as this measure also represents the best predictor of students' overall study strategy.

Self-handicapping behavior as a motivational strategy needs to be studied in Indian perspective as there is a growing need to make the students aware of the self-handicapping behavior and based on which, to develop strategies to deal with self-handicapping behavior. Therefore, the need to further research on this topic is evident. In addition to identifying these behaviors, it could be interesting to propose ways to reduce the frequency of the occurrence of self-handicapping behavior in the academic setting. This could be done by finding the impact of self-regulation, perceived competence and aspiration with the mediating role of sense of coherence It can be expected that once students become knowledgeable regarding what these strategies are and how to minimize their use, they will be able to modify their behavior and become better achievers.

The various studies have established that pursuit of a goal is associated with a high level of academic achievement further confidence in their own possibilities to mobilize cognitive resources and motivation necessary to successfully perform a task, correlates with a high level of academic achievement. Thus Competence of self- regulated learning has a strong impact on the level of school performance achieved

by pupils because it enhances the motivational level and allows the student to be accountable for their own learning. In this context it can be said that the internal values, the own rules of satisfaction, considering learning as a necessity determines a high level of academic achievement.

The variables of Academic tenacity vis. Self-Regulation, Perceived Competence and Aspirations have been widely studied individually to see their relation with student achievement and learning. Also Self Handicapping has been studied as a single motivational strategy to understand its application by children and adults from more than two decades. Considering these facts, the present study determines to involve all variables of Academic tenacity and mediating role of Sense of Coherence on Self Handicapping Behavior. After a thorough review it was also seen that studies have been majorly done in foreign perspective and lack Indian purview in subject matter. With the help of this study it would help the student population to analyze their deluded view of success and would know different ways by which they can reduce their self-handicapping behavior and improve their academic achievement.

OBJECTIVES:

- To study the relationship between Academic Self-Regulation, Perceived Competence and Aspirations with Self- Handicapping Behaviour
- To study the mediating effect of Sense of Coherence on the relationship between Academic Self-Regulation and Self- Handicapping Behaviour
- To study the mediating effect of Sense of Coherence on the relationship between Perceived Competence and Self-Handicapping Behaviour.
- To study the mediating effect of Sense of Coherence on the relationship between Aspirations and Self- Handicapping Behaviour
- To study the difference in between the students of Private schools and government schools on the measures of the study vis. Academic Self-Regulation, Perceived Competence, Aspirations, Sense of Coherence.

HYPOTHESES:

H1- There will be a significant relationship between all the variables of the study.

H2- Sense of Coherence will mediate the relationship between Academic Self-Regulation and Self-Handicapping Behaviour

H3- Sense of Coherence will mediate the relationship between Perceived Competence and Self-Handicapping Behaviour.

H4- Sense of Coherence will mediate the relationship between Aspirations and Self- Handicapping Behaviour.

H5- There will be a significant difference between the students of Private Schools and Government Schools on the measures of the study vis. Academic Self-Regulation, Perceived Competence, Aspirations, Sense of Coherence

SAMPLE:

The total sample for the present study will comprise of 300 students, a mixed sample of girls and boys. 150 students from the classes 10th, 11th and 12th of Private schools and 150 students of Government schools. In present study, purposive sampling technique will be used to select the sample.

The sample will be collected keeping the following criteria of inclusion and exclusion in mind.

Inclusion criteria-

- Middle class
- Urban domicile
- Nuclear family

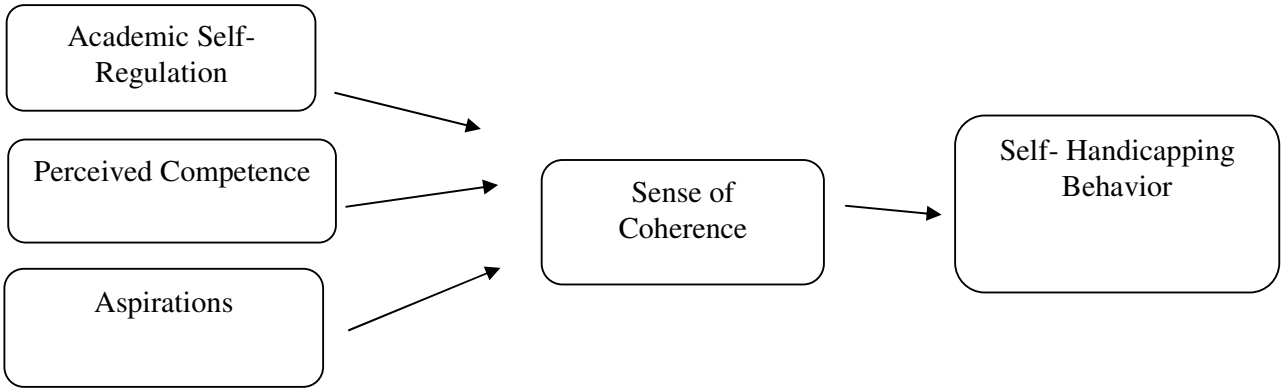
Exclusion criteria-

- Students who have repeated any of the classes

- Students having single parent
- Joint family

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Causal research design is used in present study.



Procedure-

The study will be conducted in two parts.

- First, the sample fulfilling the inclusion criteria would be approached after due permission from the college's authority
- Second, the psychological tests of the study will be administered on the sample. The order of administration will be random.

MEASURES:

- Aspiration Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1996 p.280-287) The Aspiration Index was developed to assess people's aspirations. There are 7 categories of aspirations with five specific items within each category. The seven categories include: the extrinsic aspirations of wealth, fame and image; the intrinsic aspirations of meaningful relationships, personal growth, and community contributions; and the aspiration of good health which turned out not to be clearly either extrinsic or intrinsic.
- Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire (Ryan & Connell, 1989 p. 749-761), it is a 32 item scale First, the responses to each item are on a 4-point scale. To score the scale: Very True is scored 4; Sort of True is scored 3; Not Very True is scored 2; and Not at All True is scored 1. This way, a higher score will indicate a higher level of endorsement of that regulatory style. The SRQ-A uses four subscales: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and intrinsic motivation.
- Percieved Competence Scale (William & Deci, 1996 p. 767-779), It is a small 4 item scale. perceived competence has been assessed in various studies and used, along with perceived autonomy (i.e., an autonomous regulatory style) to predict maintained behavior change, effective performance, and internalization of ambient values.
- Sense Of Coherence Scale 13 items (Antonovsky. A, 1993 p. 725-733) It is a 13 item scale. Which measures three sub scales: 1. Comprehensibility 2. Manageability 3. Meaningfulness.
- Self-Handicapping Scale (Jones & Rhodewalt, 1982 p.77) It is a 25 item scale. The subjects have to write a number in each blank as description of the kind of person they think they are most of the time. Using the following scale.

  0 = disagree very much, 1 = disagree pretty much, 2 = disagree a little, 3 = agree a little, 4 = agree pretty much, 5 = agree very much

STASTISTICAL TECHNIQUES TO BE APPLIED:

- MEAN
- STANDARD DEVIATION
- CORELATION
- REGRESSION
- MEDITATIONAL ANALYSIS
- INDEPENDENT SAMPLE t - test.

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Appendix

SENSE OF COHERENCE SCALE:

Item No.	Item Description	Incompletion Rate N=(%)
1	Do you have the feeling that you really don't care about what is going on around you?	119 (6.7)
2	Has it happened in the past that you were surprised by the behavior of the people whom you thought you knew well?	132 (7.4)
3	Has it happened that the people whom you counted on disappointed you?	173 (9.7)
4	Until now your life has had: no clear goals- very clear goals and purpose	199 (11.2)
5	Do you have the feeling that you are being treated unfairly?	150 (8.4)
6	Do you have the feeling that you are in an unfamiliar situation and don't know what to do?	156 (8.8)
7	Doing the things that you do every day is: a source of deep pleasure and satisfaction – a source of pain and boredom	181 (10.2)
8	Do you have very mixed-up feelings and ideas?	165 (9.3)
9	Does it happen that you experience feelings that you would rather not have to endure?	167 (9.4)
10	Many people, even those with strong character, sometimes feel like losers in certain situation. How often have you felt this way in the past?	188 (10.5)
11	When certain events occurred , have you generally found that: you overestimated or underestimated the importance – you assessed the situation correctly?	240 (13.5)
12	How often do you have feeling that there is little meaning in the things you do in your daily life?	159 (8.9)
13	How often do you have feelings that you are not sure you can control?	156 (8.8)

Item no. 2, 6,8,9,11- Comprehensibility

Item no. 3,5,10,13- Manageability

Item no. 1,4,7,12- Meaningfulness

ACADEMIC SELF-REGULATION QUESTIONNAIRE (SRQ-A)

The Scale (standard version)

WHY I DO THINGS

Name: _____ Age: _____

Grade: _____ ( ) Boy or Girl ( ) Teacher: _____

A. Why do I do my homework?

1. Because I want the teacher to think I'm a good student.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

2. Because I'll get in trouble if I don't.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

3. Because it's fun.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

4. Because I will feel bad about myself if I don't do it.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

5. Because I want to understand the subject.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

6. Because that's what I'm supposed to do.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

7. Because I enjoy doing my homework.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

8. Because it's important to me to do my homework.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

B. Why do I work on my classwork?

9. So that the teacher won't yell at me.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

10. Because I want the teacher to think I'm a good student.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

11. Because I want to learn new things.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

12. Because I'll be ashamed of myself if it didn't get done.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

13. Because it's fun.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

14. Because that's the rule.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

15. Because I enjoy doing my classwork.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

16. Because it's important to me to work on my classwork.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

C. Why do I try to answer hard questions in class?

17. Because I want the other students to think I'm smart.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

18. Because I feel ashamed of myself when I don't try.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

19. Because I enjoy answering hard questions.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

20. Because that's what I'm supposed to do.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

21. To find out if I'm right or wrong.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

22. Because it's fun to answer hard questions.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

23. Because it's important to me to try to answer hard questions in class.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

24. Because I want the teacher to say nice things about me.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

D. Why do I try to do well in school?

25. Because that's what I'm supposed to do.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

26. So my teachers will think I'm a good student

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

27. Because I enjoy doing my school work well.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

28. Because I will get in trouble if I don't do well.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

29. Because I'll feel really bad about myself if I don't do well.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

30. Because it's important to me to try to do well in school.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

31. Because I will feel really proud of myself if I do well.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

32. Because I might get a reward if I do well.

Very true Sort of true Not very true Not at all true

PERCEIVED COMPETENCE SCALE

Perceived Competence for Learning

Please respond to each of the following items in terms of how true it is for you with respect to your learning in this course.

Use the scale:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

not at all true somewhat true very true

1. I feel confident in my ability to learn this material.

2. I am capable of learning the material in this course.

3. I am able to achieve my goals in this course.

4. I feel able to meet the challenge of performing well in this course.

ASPIRATION INDEX

Aspirations

Everyone has long-term Goals or Aspirations. These are the things that individuals hope to accomplish over the course of their lives. In this section, you will find a number of life goals, presented one at a time, and we ask you three questions about each goal. (a) How important is this goal to you? (b) How likely is it that you will attain this goal in your future? and (c) How much have you already achieved this goal thus far? Please use the following scale in answering each of the three questions about each life goal.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

not at all moderately very

Life-goal: To be a very wealthy person.

1. How important is this to you?

2. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

3. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To grow and learn new things.

4. How important is this to you?

5. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

6. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To have my name known by many people.

7. How important is this to you?

8. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

9. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To have good friends that I can count on.

10. How important is this to you?

11. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

12. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To successfully hide the signs of aging.

13. How important is this to you?

14. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

15. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To work for the betterment of society.

16. How important is this to you?

17. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

18. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To be physically healthy.

19. How important is this to you?

20. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

21. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To have many expensive possessions.

22. How important is this to you?

23. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

24. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: At the end of my life, to be able to look back on my life as meaningful and complete.

25. How important is this to you?

26. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

27. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To be admired by many people.

28. How important is this to you?

29. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

30. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To share my life with someone I love.

31. How important is this to you?

32. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

33. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To have people comment often about how attractive I look.

34. How important is this to you?

35. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

36. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To assist people who need it, asking nothing in return.

37. How important is this to you?

38. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

39. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To feel good about my level of physical fitness.

40. How important is this to you?

41. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

42. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To be financially successful.

43. How important is this to you?

44. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

45. How much is this satisfied currently?

Life-goal: To choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life.

46. How important is this to you?

47. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

48. How much is this satisfied currently?

Life-goal: To be famous.

49. How important is this to you?

50. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

51. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To have committed, intimate relationships.

52. How important is this to you?

53. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

54. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To keep up with fashions in hair and clothing.

55. How important is this to you?

56. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

57. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To work to make the world a better place.

58. How important is this to you?

59. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

60. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To keep myself healthy and well.

61. How important is this to you?

62. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

63. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To be rich.

64. How important is this to you?

65. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

66. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To know and accept who I really am.

67. How important is this to you?

68. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

69. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To have my name appear frequently in the media.

70. How important is this to you?

71. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

72. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love.

73. How important is this to you?

74. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

75. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To achieve the "look" I've been after.

76. How important is this to you?

77. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

78. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To help others improve their lives.

79. How important is this to you?

80. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

81. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To be relatively free from sickness.

82. How important is this to you?

83. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

84. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To have enough money to buy everything I want.

85. How important is this to you?

86. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

87. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To gain increasing insight into why I do the things I do.

88. How important is this to you?

89. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

90. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To be admired by lots of different people.

91. How important is this to you?

92. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

93. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To have deep enduring relationships.

94. How important is this to you?

95. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

96. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To have an image that others find appealing.

97. How important is this to you?

98. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

99. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To help people in need.

100. How important is this to you?

101. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

102. How much have you already attained this goal?

Life-goal: To have a physically healthy life style.

103. How important is this to you?

104. How likely is it that this will happen in your future?

105. How much have you already attained this goal?

SELF HANDICAPPING BEHAVIOR SCALE

Please indicate (by writing a number in the blank each item) the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements as a description of the kind of person you think you are most of the time. Use the following

scale.

0 = disagree very much

1 = disagree pretty much

2 = disagree a little

3 = agree a little

4 = agree pretty much

5 = agree very much

_____ 1. When I do something wrong, my first impulse is to blame circumstances.

_____ 2. I tend to put things off until the last moment.

_____ 3. I tend to over prepare when I have an exam or any kind of "performance."

_____ 4. I suppose I feel "under the weather" more often than most people.

_____ 5. I always try to do my best, no matter what.

_____ 6. Before I sign up for a course or engage in any important activity, I make sure I have the proper preparation or background.

_____ 7. I tend to get very anxious before an exam or "performance."

_____ 8. I am easily distracted by noises or my own creative thoughts when I try to read.

_____ 9. I try not to get too intensely involved in competitive activities so it won't hurt too much if I lose or do poorly.

____ 10. I would rather be respected for doing my best than admired for my potential.

____ 11. I would do a lot better if I tried harder.

____ 12. I prefer small pleasures in the present to larger pleasures in the dim future.

____ 13. I generally hate to be in any condition but "at my best."

____ 14. Someday I might "get it all together."

____ 15. I sometimes enjoy being mildly ill for a day or two because it takes off the pressure.

____ 16. I would do much better if I did not let my emotions get in the way.

____ 17. When I do poorly at one kind of thing, I often console myself by remembering I am good at other things.

____ 18. I admit that I am tempted to rationalize when I don't live up to other's expectations.

____ 19. I often think I have more than my share of bad luck is sports, card games, and other measures of talent.

____ 20. I would rather not take any drug that interfered with my ability to think clearly and do the right thing.

____ 21. I overindulge in food and drink more often that I should.

____ 22. When something important is coming up, like an exam or a job interview, I try to get as much sleep as possible the night before.

____ 23. I never let emotional problems in one part of my life interfere with other things in my life.

____ 24. Usually, when I get anxious about doing well, I end up doing better.

____25. Sometimes I get so depressed that even easy tasks become difficult.

Please fill out the following information about yourself.

1. Sex: Male ( ) Female ( )

2. Where would you put yourself on the following scale?

_____/_____/_____ .

Distinct	Normal	Distinct
Underachiever	Achiever	Overachiever